

## Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-10 AID-05 PM-03

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-02 H-02 INR-07 NSAE-00 INRE-00

PRS-01 PA-01 USIE-00 OMB-01 OPR-02 SCCT-01 SY-05

ACDA-05 SCS-03 SCA-01 OC-05 CCO-00 PPT-01 EB-07

COME-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /109 W

----- 035144

P R 230955Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4463

DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6611

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS LE PLO

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SUBJECT: SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT--SITREP AS OF NOON MAY 23

REF: BEIRUT 6591

1. CONTINUING EFFORTS BY GOL OFFICIALS, CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF PLO/FATAH LEADERSHIP, AND VARIOUS LOCAL MEDIATORS MENTIONED REFTEL TO BRING ABOUT MORE COMPLETE PHALANGIST-FEDAYEEN OBSERVANCE OF A SUCCESSION OF "CEASEFIRE" HAVE NOT RPT NOT SUCCEEDED, AND LOCAL SECURITY SITUATION AT THIS MOMENT INSPIRES SOME PESSIMISM THAT DEKWANEH-TAL ZAATAR HOSTILITIES-- NOW IN THEIR FOURTH FULL DAY--CAN BE CURTAILED IN NEAR FUTURE. THOSE HOSTILITIES, IN FACT, APPEAR TO HAVE WAXED HOTTER DURING NIGHT OF MAY 22-23, AND HEAVY EXCHANGES OF SMALL ARMS, MORTAR AND ROCKET FIRE HAVE SPREAD INTO ADDITIONAL AREAS AROUND BEIRUT--NOTABLY JISR AL BASHA REFUGEE CAMP AND PREDOMINANTLY CHRISTIAN SUBURBS OF AIN RUMMANEH, CHIAH, FURN ASH SHUBBAK AND ASHRAFIYYEH. MAIN ROAD TO DAMASCUS PASSING BETWEEN FURN AS SHUBBAK AND AIN RUMMANEH WAS SHELLED (PRESUMABLY AS RESULT OF ABOVE-MENTIONED EXCHANGES) EARLY MAY 23, AND TRAVEL ON IT IS CURTAILED AT THIS MOMENT. OTHER PARTS OF CITY REMAIN RELATIVELY QUIET, WITH SHOPS AND BUSINESSES GENERALLY CLOSED AND FEW PERSONS CIRCULATING FAR FROM THEIR HOMES. AIRPORT IS CONTINUING NORMAL OPERATIONS AND ACCESS TO IT HAS SO FAR BEEN UNHINDERED.

2. LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES IN DEKWANEH-TAL ZAATAR AND OTHER AFFECTED AREAS APPEAR TO HAVE BECOME INVOLVED IN CEASEFIRE-RELATED EFFORTS TO INTERPOSE BETWEEN CONTENDING PARTIES, BUT SUCH EFFORTS SO FAR SEEM ONLY TO HAVE DRAWN FIRE FROM BOTH SIDES--FIRE WHICH IN SOME INSTANCES IS BEING RETURNED BY ISF. (GOL SECURITY OFFICIALS REPORT FOUR GENDARMES WOUNDED THUS FAR TODAY.) ARMY UNITS REPORTEDLY HAVE NOT RPT NOT INTERVENED, ALTHOUGH ARMY PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN OBSERVED FOR FIRST TIME MANNING CHECKPOINT AT LEAST ONE KEY ROAD JUNCTION IN AIN RUMMANEH-CHIAH AREA. REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER ARMY WILL ACTUALLY BE CALLED IN TO ASSIST ISF IN TRYING TO SEPARATE COMBATANTS.

3. EFFORTS BY GOL OFFICIALS AND VARIOUS UNOFFICIAL MEDIA-TORS TO BRING ABOUT EFFECTIVE OBSERVANCE OF CEASEFIRE (LATEST CONFIDENTIAL

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WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE GONE INTO EFFECT AT MIDNIGHT MAY 22-23) ARE CONTINUING, DESPITE DIFFICULTY BEING EXPERIENCED IN IMPOSING IT ON EXTREMIST FACTIONS ON BOTH SIDES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT 'ARAFAT CONVOKED FEDAYEEN "SUMMIT" MEETING LATE MAY 21 TO URGE RESTRAINT ON PFLP'S HABASH, PDFLP'S HAWATMEH, PFLP/GC'S GIBRIL AND LEADERS OF OTHER FEDAYEEN ORGANIZATIONS. ACCORDING TO ONE REPORT FROM USUALLY RELIABLE SOURCE, 'ARAFAT MADE STRONG PITCH AGAINST ALLOWING CURRENT

PHALAGIST-PALESTINIAN FIGHTING TO GET OUT OF HAND, NOTING THAT HE UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM PRES SADAT AND OTHER ARAB LEADERS TO COOPERATE WITH GOL IN BRINGING SITUATION UNDER CONTROL. HE ALLEGEDLY PROPOSED THAT FATAH ASSUME DIRECT CONTROL OVER ALL RPT ALL FEDAYEEN MILITARY GROUPS OPERATING IN BEIRUT--AND PARTICULARLY IN TEL ZAATAR CAMP--AS MEANS OF ENSURING BETTER OBSERVANCE OF CEASEFIRE. OUR SOURCE REPORTED THAT THIS PROPOSAL WAS NOT RPT NOT AGREED TO BY OTHER FEDAYEEN LEADERS PRESENT, ESPECIALLY HABASH AND GIBRIL. (WE HAVE RECEIVED SUBSEQUENT REPORTS MAY 23, HOWEVER, TO EFFECT THAT FATAH HAS RPT HAS SUCCEEDED IN GAINING CONTROL OVER FEDAYEEN ELEMENTS OPERATING FROM TEL ZAATAR.)

4. COMMENT: SHOULD BE CLEAR FROM FOREGOING THAT SECURITY CONDITIONS IN BEIRUT ARE CONFUSED (AS ARE WE) AND EXTREMELY UNPREDICTABLE, WITH CONTINUING POSSIBILITY THAT IT CAN DETERIORATE FURTHER IN NEXT FEW HOURS OR DAYS,

5. WE ARE GIVING THIS CABLE WIDER DISTRIBUTION THAN USUAL IN ORDER THAT ADDRESSEE POSTS WILL BE IN BETTER POSITION DISCOURAGE TOURISTS AND OTHER TRAVELERS PLANNING VISIT LEBANON AT THIS TIME.

6. AS FAR AS WE CAN DETERMINE, ALL AMERICANS SAFE.  
GODLEY

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** SECURITY, POLITICAL SITUATION, PROGRESS REPORTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 23 MAY 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Office:** ACTION NEA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 75 BEIRUT 6591  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 21 MAY 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <21 MAY 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <22 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT--SITREP AS OF NOON MAY 23  
**TAGS:** PINS, LE, PLO  
**To:** STATE DIA  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006